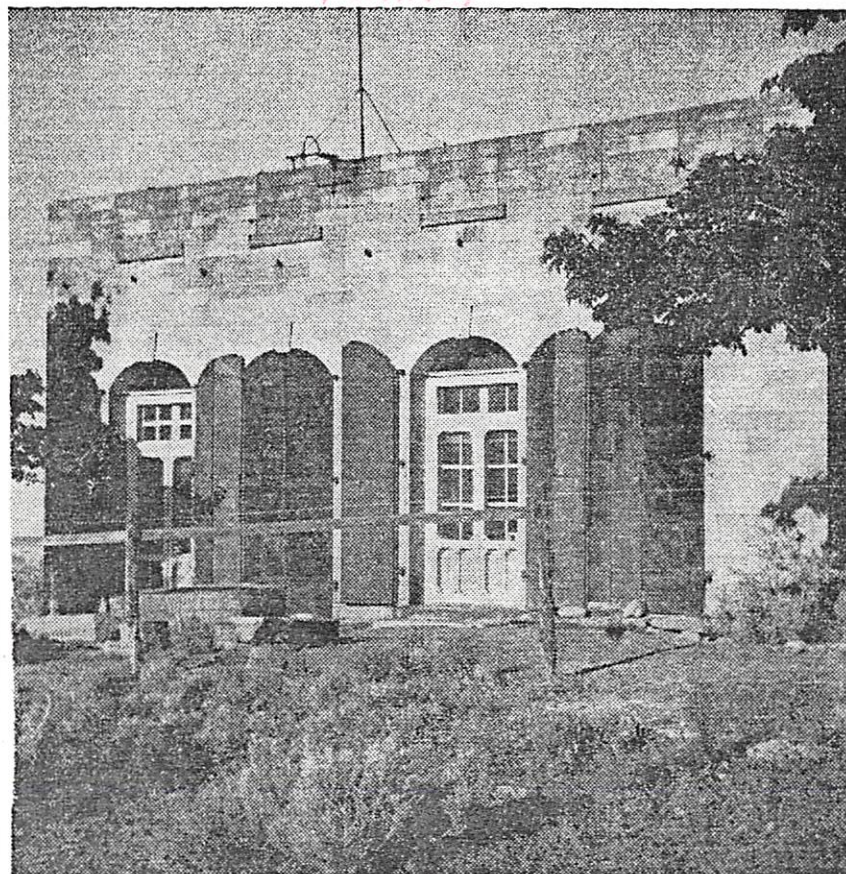


Silver Reef Mine
near St. George

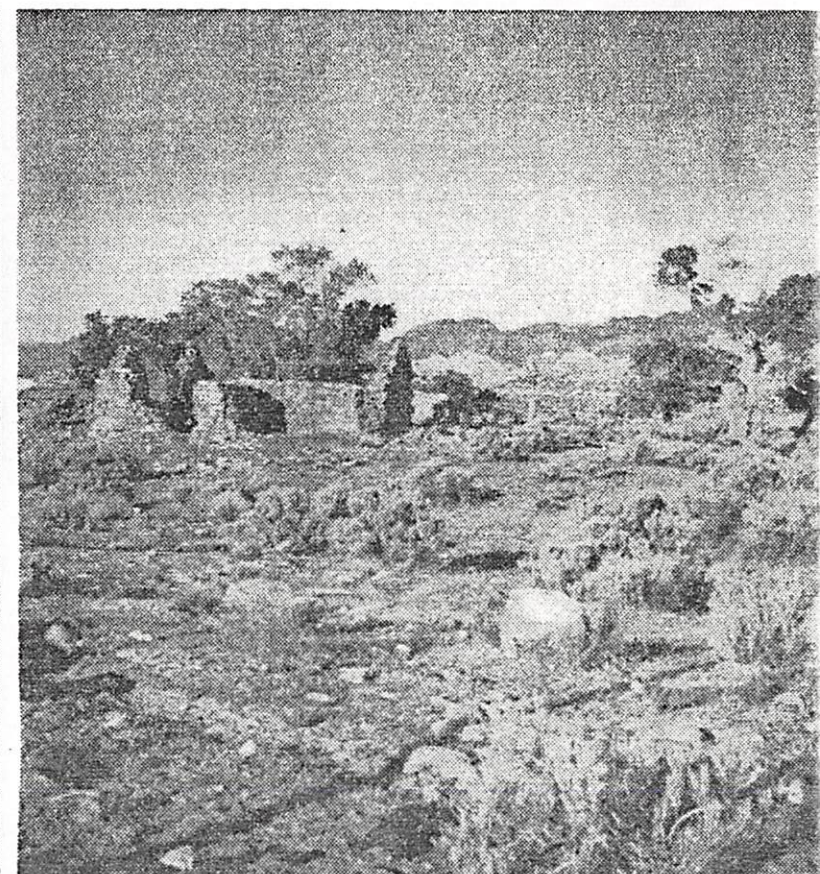
Mining



Of the building which formerly housed the Silver Reef's leading drug store, only a single wall stands. The town boasted of 5000 inhabitants.



Its shutters hang in the desert wind and its cages see only pack rats now. This sturdy institution is the former Wells-Fargo bank building at the Reef.



Sagebrush, old stone ruins and a few aged honey locust trees are all that mark the site of this fantastic Utah mining town. The city died in 1900.

Silver Reef—Utah's Most Famous Impossibility

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"Once you have declared an occurrence impossible," they say, "fate goes on double-time to prove you a liar!"

Nowhere was this truth proven more definitely than down in the southwestern corner of Utah, in the latter half of the 19th century. From the earliest dawn of scientific mining, experts had agreed that silver did not—and geologically could not—occur in sandstone.

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*Sun. 31 July 1949
SL Tribune*

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By Nell Murbarger

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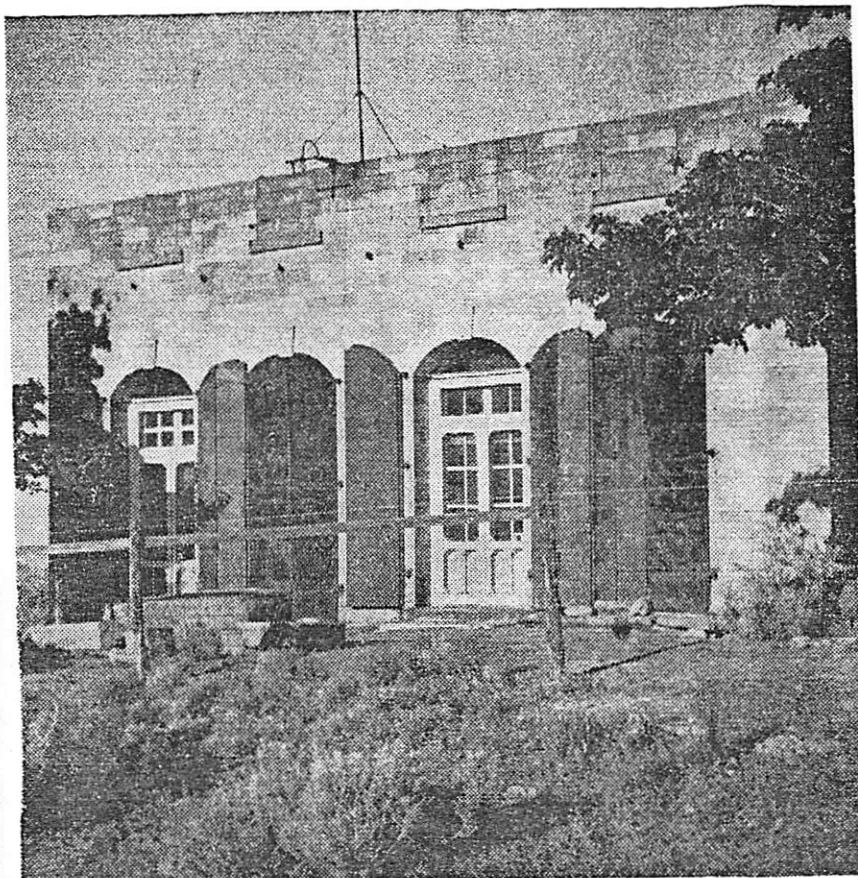
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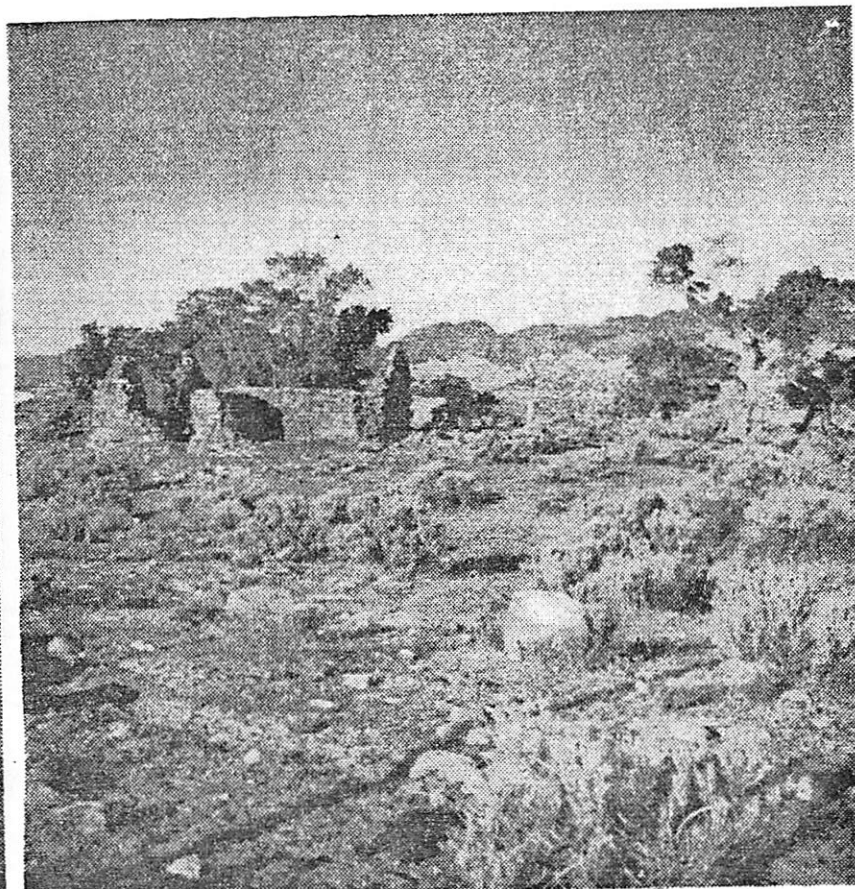
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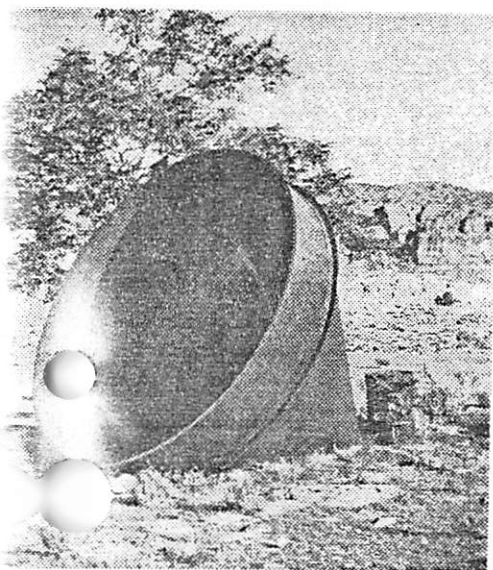
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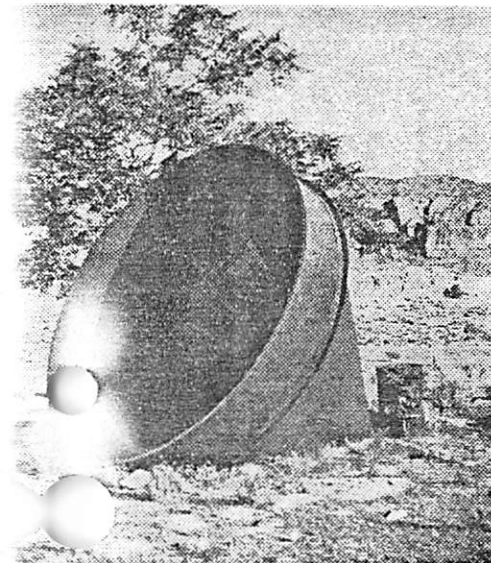
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TODAY, the Reef is a sorry spectacle. The only building still roofed and intact is the old Wells Fargo bank with its tall, narrow windows and doors, its heavy shutters and walls of faced stone. Elsewhere over the townsite stand gaunt rock ruins, roofs tumbled into brush-grown basements, and walls leaning or fallen in desolate heaps. Scattered among the other debris is a plethora of ponderous mining machinery, old railroad rails, tangled cables, iron ore buckets and scores of pieces with meaning only to a veteran mining man.

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The Shortest 'Wettest' River in Idaho

By Steve Lamoreux

ONE OF Idaho's most neglected scenic attractions can be found directly under a bridge on the Wendell-Bliss road. It is the Malad river, the shortest in Idaho and possibly the world.

For a tumultuous three and a half miles, the milky green Malad cuts its narrow path

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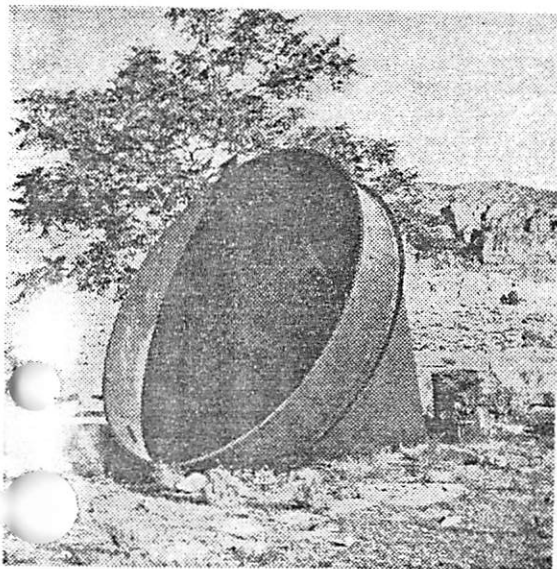
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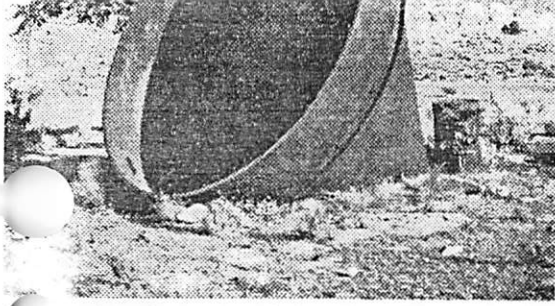
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A gigantic funnel is a separating cone for silver, used in processing Silver Reef ore.

the mining gentlemen wish to purchase the other stone?

No, they didn't wish . . . but, wait! That broken stone—here was a chance to get unassailable proof of Murphy's false assays! Everyone knew that sandstone never carried values.

BUYING the shattered wheel—so the story goes—they mortared it into still smaller fragments to effectually mask its identity and submitted a bagful of the material to Murphy for assay.

When Murphy's report showed the Utah "sample" to carry \$200 in silver to the ton, the infuriated miners were for stringing him up to the nearest crossbeam. One of them, fortunately, had a bump of curiosity sufficiently large that he investigated the grindstone's point of origin.

There he discovered an entire reef of sandstone, rich in horn silver!

With the world's leading geologists still resolutely maintaining that silver's occurrence in sandstone was a mineralogical impossibility, news of the discovery met largely with derision and gained serious attention from neither capital nor miners.

Not until a sample of the ore was sent to Walker Brothers, Salt Lake bankers, was the deposit accorded any outside interest. Silver's occurrence in sandstone might be just as impossible as claimed; but, nevertheless, this silver!

The astute Walkers, who were not noted overlooking opportunities, immediately telegraphed to the scene three of their ablest

Sunday, July 31, 1949

AMONG the saints were a few isolationists who resented this wholesale "invasion" by non-Mormons, but for the most part the colonists took a wider view. Apostle Erastus Snow, leader of the Virgin valley settlements, even went on record as thanking God that he had sent "Brother" Barbee and his mining camp to provide outlet for Mormon farm produce, thereby ameliorating the struggle these colonists had long endured due to inadequate transportation facilities and limited markets.

If there was ever any friction between the Virgin valley saints and the "Silver Reef sinners," there seems to be no record of it. On the contrary, some of the most outstanding examples of cooperation in Utah's early history took place here.

For example, there was the matter of the Catholic church . . .

Father Lawrence Scanlan, later bishop of the Salt Lake diocese, had ridden into the unholy mining camp on a mule in 1877. He was an earnest young priest, and in the weeks immediately following his arrival he solicited from the miners, merchants, gamblers and "good time women" funds sufficient to enable the building of a church, school and hospital. Until work of construction might be completed, however, there was in Silver Reef no vacant building in which the church might function.

RECOGNIZING his high principles and capacity for good works, church leaders at St. George gave the young padre free use of their tabernacle for Catholic services, and in order that his fledgling church should not be handicapped through lack of proper music, choristers at St. George even learned to sing Catholic masses in Latin!

A little later, when Uncle Sam began concerning himself with the marital affairs of his Utah nephews, Silver Reef found herself in position to repay St. George's courtesy.

Because the Reef was then southern Utah's largest city—as well as its only genteel settlement of any importance—federal officers who were periodically dispatched on "polyg hunts" adopted it as their headquarters and from there conducted raiding forays on settlements of the Virgin valley.

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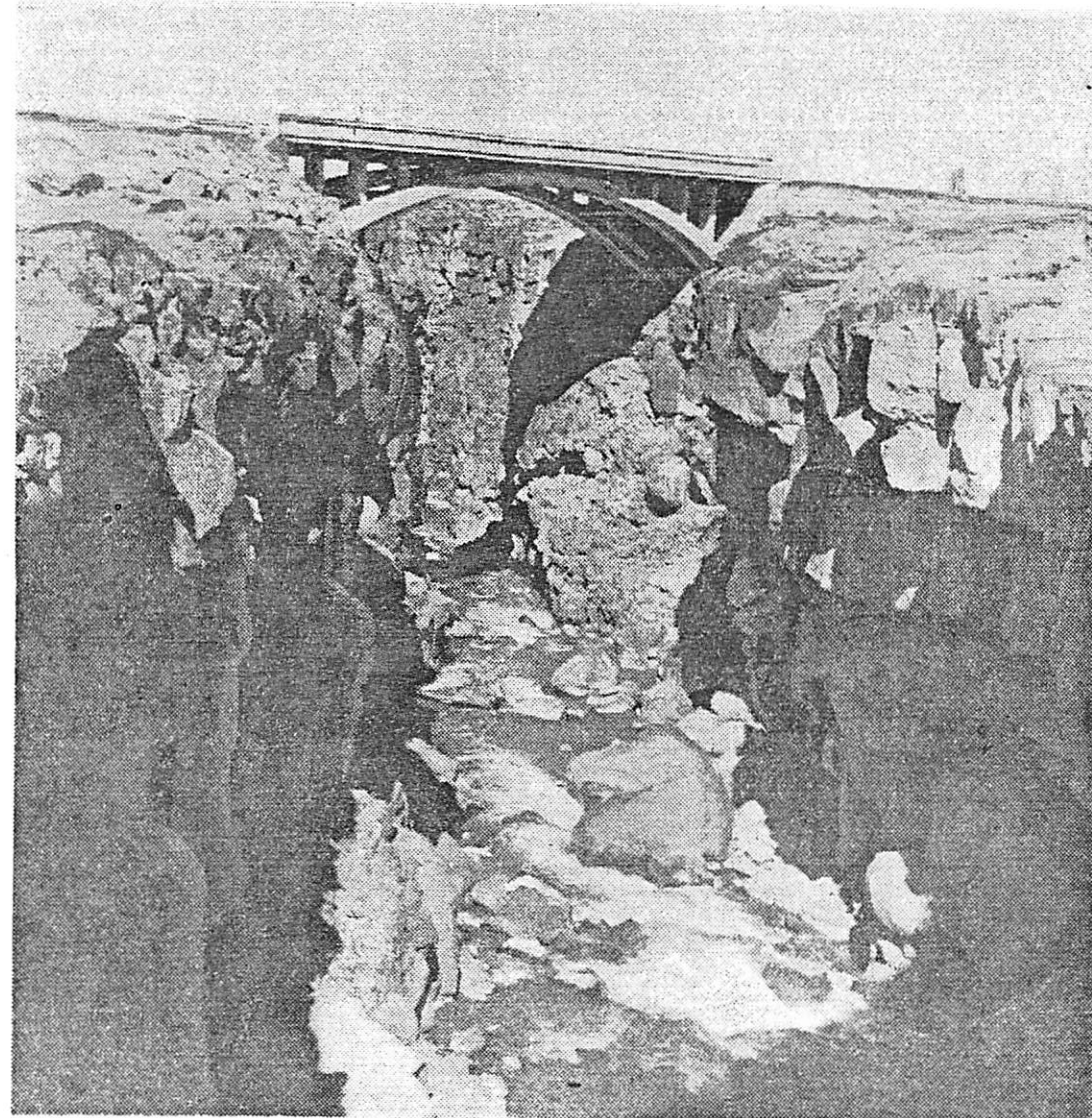
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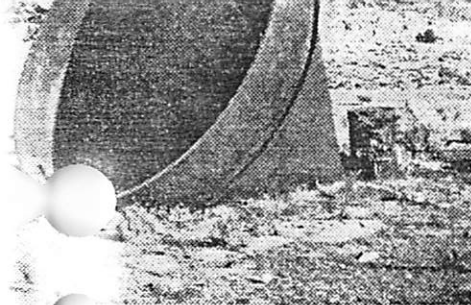
THE MALAD also stands alone for being one of Idaho's "wettest" rivers, at least in the southern part of the state. According to the Idaho Digest, the Malad "is the only stream in the whole of southern Idaho from Henrys Fork within 12 miles of the west boundary of Yellowstone park, to the Idaho-Oregon line, a distance measured along Snake river of fully 450 miles, which, rising in the mountains in the north, reaches Snake river in the summertime."

Its waters, headed by a huge spring, apparently pop up out of the desert in the same way that the Thousand Springs are fed. Theory has it that the springs are fed by the Big and Little Lost Rivers of the Mackay area, but no one is sure.

In any case, the Malad river merits a stop and a cautious look. Most people crawl to the cliff edge on their hands and knees to view this, one of Idaho's most accessible—and most neglected—scenic attractions.



This isn't one of Idaho's famous "lost" rivers. It's just neglected. Due to a lack of markers, most motorists pass this scenic attraction without ever noticing its spectacular gorge or water.



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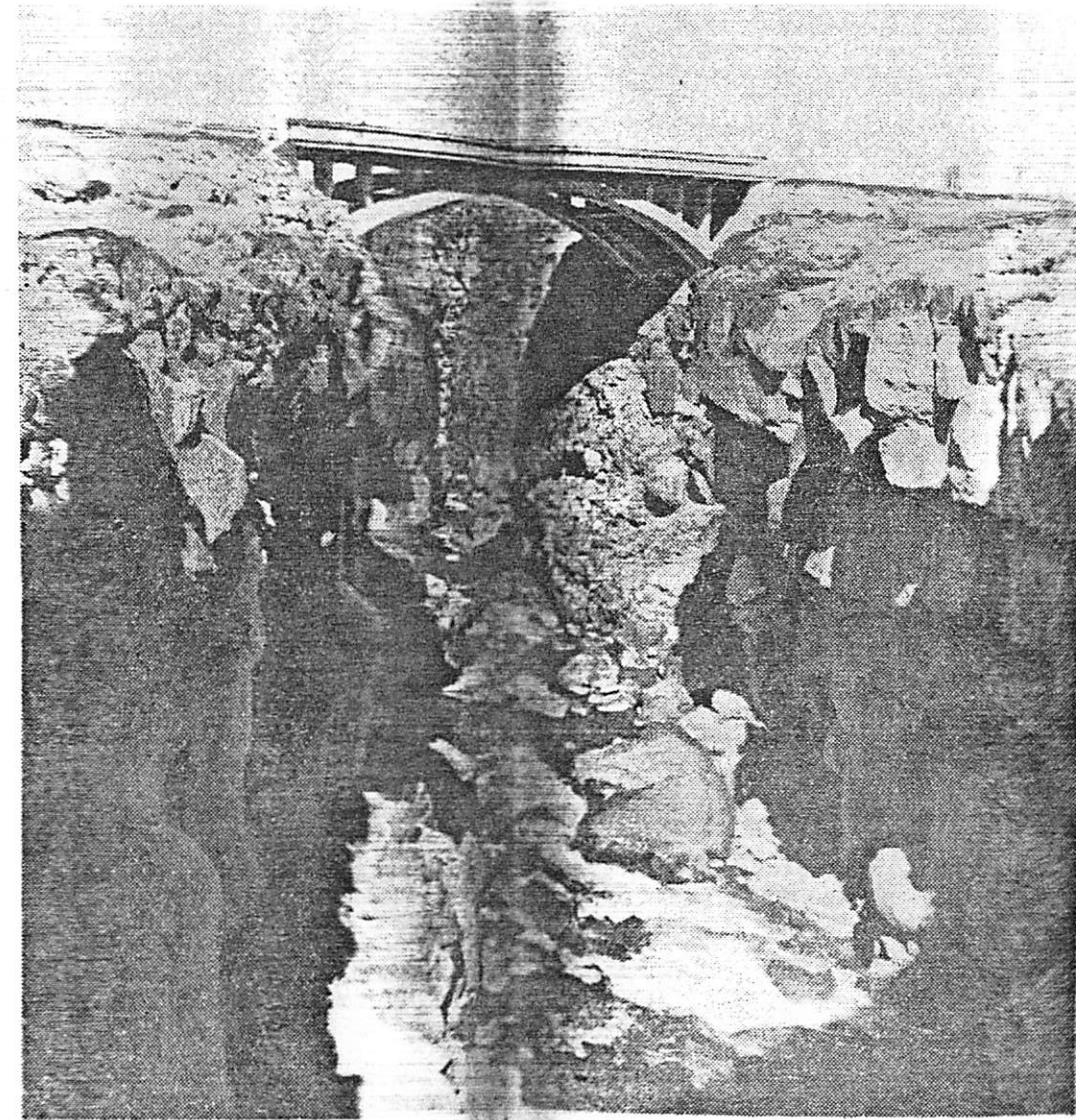
ers on the highway denoting an approach to the crossing, not even the usual river marker on the bridge itself. The road is good, the bridge is no longer than other structures that span irrigation canals. A motorist whizzes by, and thinks he has just crossed a dry gulch. Someone in the back seat may be startled into asking "What was that?," and doesn't get an answer.

Another reason for the river's obscurity might be the famous Thousand Springs at Hagerman, which to date have received plenty of publicity.

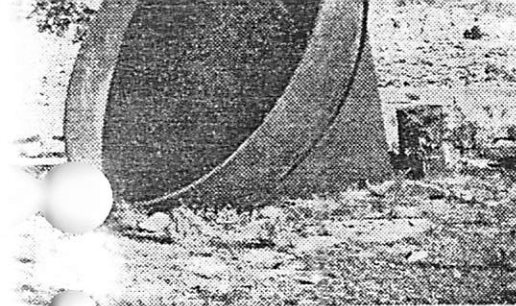
THE MALAD also stands alone for being one of Idaho's "wettest" rivers, at least in the southern part of the state. According to the Idaho Digest, the Malad "is the only stream in the whole of southern Idaho from Tenrys Fork within 12 miles of the west boundary of Yellowstone park, to the Idaho-Oregon line, a distance measured along Snake river of fully 450 miles, which, rising in the mountains in the north, reaches Snake river in the summertime."

Its waters, headed by a huge spring, apparently pop up out of the desert in the same way that the Thousand Springs are fed. Theory has it that the springs are fed by the Big and Little Lost Rivers of the Mackay area, but no one is sure.

In any case, the Malad river merits a stop and a cautious look. Most people crawl to the cliff edge on their hands and knees to view this, one of Idaho's most accessible—and most neglected—scenic attractions.



This isn't one of Idaho's famous "lost" rivers. It's just neglected. Due to a lack of markers, most motorists pass this scenic attraction without ever noticing its spectacular gorge or walls.



A separating cone is a separating cone for ore used in processing Silver Reef ore.

mining gentlemen wish to purchase the stone? No, they didn't wish . . . but, wait! That stone—here was a chance to get unobtainable proof of Murphy's false assays! Everyone knew that sandstone never carried silver.

BUYING the shattered wheel—so the story goes—they mortared it into still smaller fragments to effectually mask its identity and substituted a bagful of the material to Murphy's assay.

When Murphy's report showed the Utah sample to carry \$200 in silver to the ton, infuriated miners were for stringing him to the nearest crossbeam. One of them, fortunately, had a bump of curiosity sufficiently large that he investigated the grindstone's point of origin.

There he discovered an entire reef of sandstone, rich in horn silver!

With the world's leading geologists still absolutely maintaining that silver's occurrence in sandstone was a mineralogical impossibility, news of the discovery met largely with suspicion and gained serious attention from neither capital nor miners.

Not until a sample of the ore was sent to Walker Brothers, Salt Lake bankers, was the possibility accorded any outside interest. Silver's occurrence in sandstone might be just as impossible as claimed; but, nevertheless, this was the case!

HE stute Walkers, who were not noted for looking opportunities, immediately took to the scene three of their ablest

day, July 31, 1949

AMONG the saints were a few isolationists who resented this wholesale "invasion" by non-Mormons, but for the most part the colonists took a wider view. Apostle Erastus Snow, leader of the Virgin valley settlements, even went on record as thanking God that he had sent "Brother" Barbee and his mining camp to provide outlet for Mormon farm produce, thereby ameliorating the struggle these colonists had long endured due to inadequate transportation facilities and limited markets.

If there was ever any friction between the Virgin valley saints and the "Silver Reef sinners," there seems to be no record of it. On the contrary, some of the most outstanding examples of cooperation in Utah's early history took place here.

For example, there was the matter of the Catholic church . . .

Father Lawrence Scanlan, later bishop of the Salt Lake diocese, had ridden into the unholy mining camp on a mule in 1877. He was an earnest young priest, and in the weeks immediately following his arrival he solicited from the miners, merchants, gamblers and "good time women" funds sufficient to enable the building of a church, school and hospital. Until work of construction might be completed, however, there was in Silver Reef no vacant building in which the church might function.

RECOGNIZING his high principles and capacity for good works, church leaders at St. George gave the young padre free use of their tabernacle for Catholic services, and in order that his fledgling church should not be handicapped through lack of proper music, choristers at St. George even learned to sing Catholic masses in Latin!

A little later, when Uncle Sam began concerning himself with the marital affairs of his Utah nephews, Silver Reef found herself in position to repay St. George's courtesy.

Because the Reef was then southern Utah's largest city—as well as its only genteel settlement of any importance—federal officers who were periodically dispatched on "polyg hunts" adopted it as their headquarters and from there conducted raiding forays on settlements of the Virgin valley.

Due to a cooperative alliance between telegraph operators of the Reef and St. George,

ONE OF Idaho's most neglected scenic attractions can be found directly under a bridge on the Wendell-Bliss road. It is the Malad river, the shortest in Idaho and possibly the world.

For a tumultuous three and a half miles, the milky green Malad cuts its narrow path

through vertical lava walls, and empties into the Snake near Hagerman. This paradoxical stream is probably unknown to most of the residents of Malad city, since they live about 13 miles from

the Utah state line, nearly 160 miles away.

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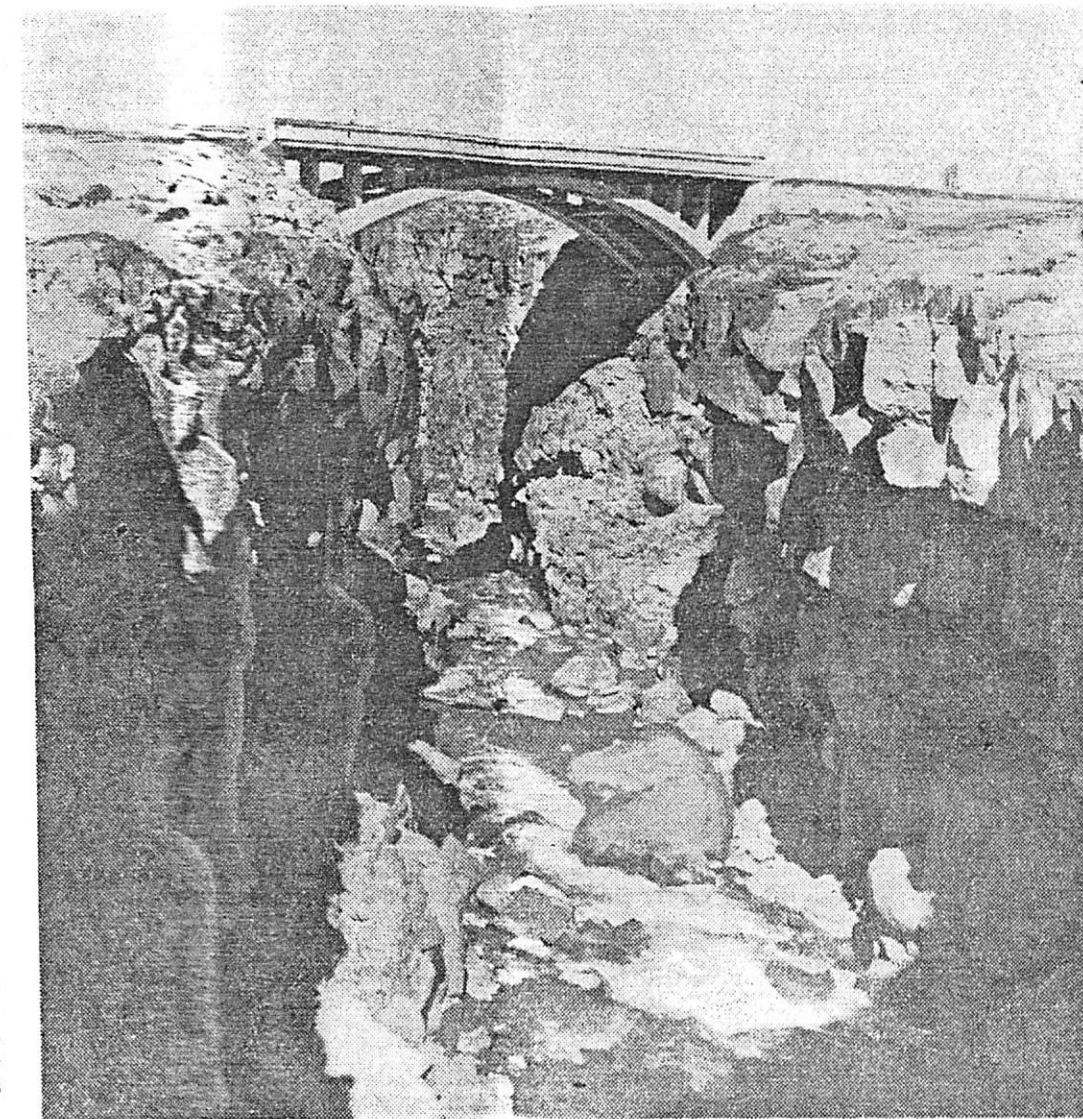
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